



City of Freeport

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 27, 2021 5:30 PM

Council Chambers, Freeport City Hall

Council Members Present: Mayor Russ Barley, Councilwoman Elizabeth Brannon, Councilman Eddie Farris, Councilman Mark Martin, Councilwoman Elizabeth Haffner, Councilwoman Green

Staff Members Present: City Manager Charlie Simmons, City Clerk Malani Robinson, City Attorney Clay Adkinson, Planning Director Latilda Hughes-Neel

1. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Mayor Barley in the Council Chambers of Freeport City Hall.

2. Walton County Mobility Plan/ Mobility Fee

Planning Director Hughes-Neel presented to the Council a planned development projects map for the City of Freeport, which illustrated projected population clusters based on single family and multi-family unit projects. Planning Director Hughes-Neel noted that several projects along Highway 331 were awaiting the construction of the new wastewater treatment facility before building. After reviewing the layout of the City based on the planned development projects map it was established that:

- North of Hwy 20 expected 7,154 units to be built out within 20 years.
- 331 South expected an estimated 3,813 units to be built.
- 331 North is expected to have 6,200 units to be built.
- There would be a need for an additional wastewater treatment plant north of Highway 20 to sustain growth.
- The City would experience an influx of mass growth, based on the current FDEP the population would rise to 32,901 within the next 20 years.

- The City is moving in the right direction by focusing on improving its water and sewage systems.

Councilman Farris inquired on the status of the City using portables to allow projects to commence ahead of the wastewater treatment plants being built. City Manager Simmons informed the Council that the option to use portables is available to developers if needed and is a tool the City is willing to use. Councilwoman Brannon wanted to assure that the City would keep their options open and be willing to work with any project that is ready to build, ahead of . Planning Director Hughes-Neel assured the Council that the City is working hard to deliver on the planned projects and is willing to work with anyone. City Manager Simmons emphasized that the City is willing to accommodate serious developers that are ready to work and move forward. Planning Director Hughes-Neel noted that once plans have been submitted and a developer's agreement has been signed the City would do its part to ensure that the project succeeded.

Councilwoman Green queried on how the city would facilitate space for schools based on current development projects and the expected increase in population. Planning Director Hughes-Neel informed the Council that she would be presenting a comprehensive plan amendment within the next month which will address this concern. Planning Director Hughes-Neel noted that with changes in legislation it was time for the City to update its interlocal school agreement with the school district to ensure all entities are on the same page. Planning Director Hughes-Neel added that the school district has a seat on the Planning Review Board to ensure that they can give feedback and request land usage on certain projects. Councilwoman Green noted that the multiplier for population growth and the numbers presented by the Department of Education are predictive that the City will encounter a huge issue with the incoming of school ready students and no space to accommodate them. Councilwoman Green reminded the Council that money from the state to assist with schools does not come quickly therefore the City should be making plans to address this concern beforehand. Planning Director Hughes-Neel remarked that the comprehensive plan will have tools to assist the City with addressing this concern.

Planning Director Hughes-Neel continued the discussion by noting the correlation between the Mobility Plan and the City's development projects. Planning Director Hughes-Neel reviewed the Mobility Plan Map with the Council noting that it presented the opportunity for :

- Connector Roads to alleviate traffic from Highway 20
- Potential sites for traffic Lights
- Bypass roads
- Bridges

Planning Director Hughes-Neel discussed discrepancies within the Mobility Plan with the Council, leaving room for critiques.

Planning Director Hughes-Neel presented the Needs Plan within the Mobility Plan noting that the drafted map was confusing for her to follow. Planning Director Hughes- Neel noted that the Needs Map needed additional traffic lights, lacked appropriate mediums, and called for major upgrades to roads which infringed upon private properties. Planning Director Hughes-Neel noted that Council should create notes on items they needed clarification on and would like change so they could be addressed at the Special

Meeting with the County. Councilwoman Brannon sought clarity on who advised the County for drafting the maps. Planning Director Hughes-Neel informed the Council that the conversation with the County was very brief and focused on the alleviation of traffic from Highway 20. Councilmembers noted the importance of relieving traffic from Highway 20. City Manager Simmons noted that there was talk of creating a connector road from Publix to the Hammock Bay which would assist in better traffic flow. City Manager Simmons noted that Marquis Way would also be a hot topic at next week's meeting to ease traffic issues. City Manager Simmons expressed his concerns on how the conversation initiated between the County and the City regarding the maps, however he noted that the Board of County Commissioners were ready to open the floor for discussions and to collaborate. City Manager Simmons also noted that the Council should be aware of the cost of the projects and discuss who would be funding it. Councilman Martin noted that every project listed came with a cost and the upgrading of the roads was a necessity for the City. Councilman Martin continued the discussion by highlighting that the sewer and water efforts would be key to the economic growth of the City, noting that he was in favor of the sewer and water department operating as a separate entity further down the line. Councilman Martin emphasized the need for the City to become creative with ways to secure funds being that the City was behind.

Councilman Martin highlighted his concerns regarding the plans sketched out in the maps, noting that a planner from Gainesville designed the future plans for the City. Councilman Martin noted that the top engineers for the City regarding roads were not consulted prior to the design of the plans which raised an area of concern. Councilman Martin furthered the discussion by cautioning Council of the adjacent zones hazards within the mobility plan, noting the importance of local input being vital to the overall success of the City. Planning Director Hughes-Neel noted that the mobility plan fees posed a great threat to affordable housing in the community. Councilwoman Green queried City Attorney Adkinson on the use of sales tax fees as an alternative to the impact fees of the mobility plan.


3. Adjournment

Mayor Barley motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:19 PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Ahlberg", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Rodriguez", written over a horizontal line.

City Clerk